"WHEN I WAS A BOY & PEOPLE WOULD TALK... MAKE ME DOWNRIGHT MAD"

DRAWER 6A SPURIOUS QUOTATIONS

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Abraham Lincoln Quotations & Sayings

Spurious

"When I Was a Boy and People Would Talk…Downright Mad"

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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PROVOKED LINCOLN TO HEAR TALK 'TOO DEEP,' STORY

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Feb. 13 (A.P.).—Irritation at talk he couldn't understand, was the driving impulse that gave Abraham Lincoln an education, Dr. John H. Finley of New York City, related at a public Lincoln commemoration in the Sangamon county circuit courtroom, which housed the legislature in which Lincoln served as member.

Finley added this new detail of information regarding Lincoln in telling of an interview which Lincoln gave Dr. John C. Gulliver, who preceded him as president of Knox college in Galesburg, Ill.

"As to education," Lincoln was quoted, "the newspapers are correct—I never went to school more than 12 months in my life. But I can say that among my earliest recollections I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in my life. But that always disturbed my ten per and has ever since."

WHY LINCOLN LIKED TO USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE.

I REMEMBER how when a mere child I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I can remember going to my little bedroom after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father and spending no small part of the night walking up and down and trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their (to me) dark sayings. I could not sleep, although I tried to, when I got on such a hunt for an idea until I had caught it, and when I thought I had got it I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me, for I am never easy now when I am handling a thought till I have bounded it north and bounded it south and bounded it east and bounded it west.—Abraham Lincoln.

Talk

Abraham Lincoln once said:

> "When I was a boy and people would talk so I couldn't understand them, it used to make me downright mad. I made up my mind that when I talked or wrote, I would make people understand me."

And Lincoln did - he was careful to talk and write directly and simply.

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